

Work Inspiration Employer Handbook

Welcome to Work Inspiration

Work Inspiration is easy to deliver, adaptable and transformative. Learn how to get started.



What is the Work Inspiration program?

Work Inspiration is an adaptable model that connects young people and business, and inspires young people to explore the world of work. The Work Inspiration program is built on three mandatory learning activities:

- 1) **All About Me:** A conversation about the young person's interests, aspirations and character traits.
- 2) **Look Behind the Scenes:** Raises awareness of the range of occupations in the workplace, industry or region and how they relate to each other.
- 3) **Careers Happen:** A conversation with an employee/employer about how their career journey has unfolded, leading to reflection by students on their plans and hopes.

These Work Inspiration "Insight Activities" are **flexible!** Tap into your creativity and expertise and make them your own. Work Inspiration Insight Activities offer organisations a ready-to-go mix of inspiring activities that encourage young people to gain insight into the world of work. For a video overview of the three Insight Activities, [click here](#).

Make Work Inspiration your own

Your program can run anywhere from one to five days. You can run the program with as little as two students and as many as your workplace can accommodate. As long as your Work Inspiration program includes the three Insight Activities and makes work experience meaningful and inspiring, the format is up to you!

The **Work Inspiration Employer Toolkit** provides you with a simple step-by-step guide, an in-depth overview of the program, and "Insight Activity" templates so you're ready from day one.

These are helpful guides Work Inspiration is YOUR program and you are more than welcome to tailor them to your workplace or industry.

What resources are needed?

Work Inspiration is an excellent skilled volunteering opportunity for your staff. While the program can be designed and delivered by one staff member, the greater the number of staff that are able to take part, the better. The greatest need for staff involvement will be for the Insight Activities, during which time there will ideally be one staff member available for every one to two students.

The number of days you host the program is up to you as well. Suggested one, three, and five-day structures are available in the Employer Handbook to help you design your program.

What next?

This Work Inspiration Employer Handbook walks you through everything you need to plan and deliver a reimagined work experience program.

This Employer Handbook includes:

- 1) **The Key Steps:** A quick overview of how to take Work Inspiration from planning to delivery.
- 2) **Designing Your Program:** We'll walk you through program design so Work Inspiration is a meaningful experience for all involved.
- 3) **Example Program Plans:** Need an off-the-shelf plan to get you started? No problem, we've got you covered.
- 4) **Young People – A Tip Sheet:** A facilitation guide to help you lead activities with young people.
- 5) **Program Evaluation Forms:** Ready-to-go evaluation tools so you can continually improve your program.

This Employer Handbook is your guide to designing, delivering and repeating Work Inspiration in your workplace.

The key steps

Step 1: Host a 'Big Conversation' (planning meeting)

Arrange an internal meeting or planning workshop with key staff from your organisation to introduce the Work Inspiration concept. In this meeting you will discuss what work experience opportunities, if any, you currently offer young people, why you do so (or should do so!) and what else you could do to make these opportunities as meaningful as possible. Use the videos and resources on the website to help engage your colleagues.

Step 2: Design your Work Inspiration program

This is where you get to design YOUR Work Inspiration program. As long as it incorporates the three Work Inspiration Insight Activities, and has been designed to be as inspirational and meaningful as possible, the rest is up to you!

Some questions to get your started: Which young people should your program be for? How many days will it run? Which staff will be involved? How many young people can take part? What will they actually do?

Use this booklet and the resources in the Work Inspiration Employer Handbook to help develop your program. For inspiration, check out what other employers have done by watching our case study videos.

Step 3: Establish when and where you would like to run it

Decide which parts of the organisation will be featured or involved. Will your program take place at one site or across multiple locations? Will it incorporate external site visits?

Step 4: Engage young people

Do you already have a relationship with a group of young people or a school/youth provider that you could connect with? If not, contact the Work Inspiration team and we can help.

Step 5: Engage staff

Engage members of your workplace to be involved with the program. This may include being a part of interviews with young people, or leading activities.

Step 6: Run your Work Inspiration program!

Step 7: Debrief, evaluate and improve

Experience shows the best way to make your Work Inspiration program exceptional is by running it over and over again, improving it each time. We've provided some simple evaluation tools to assist you with this in the Employer Handbook.

Step 8: Do it again!



Designing your program

The objective of any Work Inspiration program is to give young people an inspiring experience that introduces them to your world of work and the various roles and opportunities in your organisation or industry. Further, all Work Inspiration programs should give young people an understanding of how careers 'happen' and what it takes to be successful in the workplace.

Step 1: Decide on the best format for your organisation – traditional work experience or something new?

The format of your Work Inspiration program should be designed to best suit your organisation and workplace. In some cases this may simply involve improving your current work experience program; in others it may involve developing something completely new.

Your program can run for anywhere between one and five days. The number of young people involved can be anywhere between one and 100. As long as your Work Inspiration program achieves the program objective, the format is up to you!

Step 2: Build Work Inspiration Insight Activities into your program

To assist in developing your program, three Insight Activities with accompanying workbooks have been developed to address the common short fallings of work experience. By including these in your program you can ensure that the work experience you provide is meaningful, relevant and, most of all, inspiring for young people. Guides for running these activity workbooks are available to download from the Work Inspiration website.

Insight Activity One: 'All About Me'

Discover the talents, passions, interests and personalities of the young people in your program through a 'personality quiz' style conversation that will build rapport and trust. Knowing the students' personalities and interests will allow you to tailor the Work Inspiration program for each individual and suggest roles within the organisation that may be of interest to them.

Insight Activity Two: 'Behind the Scenes'

Present your organisation to the young people: outline what your organisation does and why, as well as how it operates and the various roles and opportunities that are available. The more interactive this session can be the better. Having outlined your organisation and the type of work you do, take the young people on a tour of the workplace, stopping to visit some of the employees in action.

Insight Activity Three: 'Careers Happen'

An interactive session where young people interview staff members about their career journey, from their teenage years up until now. Reflecting on those conversations, students then create a 'career board'—a visual representation of a staff member's career journey.



Step 3: Think about what else to include in your program

Beyond the three Insight Activities, feel free to develop any other activities or experiences that will help inspire and prepare young people for the world of work. The following activities have shown to be effective:

Student-led project and presentation

Young people are given a project that they must complete during their program and present to staff on their final day. Ideally this project will in some way be representative of your organisation and the work you do. Depending on the project, different members of your organisation may be involved in helping participants in preparing for their presentation. Example projects include developing a new product idea for your business, developing an advertising or PR campaign for your organisation, delivering a training workshop on 'connecting with young people today', developing a presentation on 'what makes a great work experience program', etc. Having staff members help with the project and attend the presentation is great for employee engagement.

Employability/workplace skills workshops

These are fun, interactive workshops that help develop young people's 'employability' skills and their understanding of what's expected in a workplace. The more hands-on they can be the better. Incorporating YouTube clips, humour and games can be really effective. Example workshops include interview techniques and mock interviews, social media awareness, CV writing, the importance of body language, goal setting, time management, problem solving, email/phone communication, etc.

Real-life tasks (with context!)

This simply involves allowing young people to experience and undertake some real-life work tasks. Ideally these tasks would align to the students' personality profile from Insight Activity One and may include assisting aligned staff members, working in teams to complete tasks, employee 'shadowing',

Step 4: Sustainability

Whilst some time and effort is involved in developing your first Work Inspiration program, running your second, third or thirtieth becomes much easier and more efficient. The organisations that get the most out of Work Inspiration run the program regularly, improving and streamlining the process each time. We have provided some tips on evaluating and improving Work Inspiration program delivery on the Work Inspiration website.



Example Work Inspiration program structures

Below you will find examples of one, three, and five-day Work Inspiration program structures. Please remember these are only guides; feel free to design your program to suit your organisation. Many small organisations will find the one-day program particularly appealing. It's important to remember that being able to dedicate even one day can have a tremendous impact for students.

Unlike traditional work experience programs, Work Inspiration is designed so that each young person interacts with a range of people and roles within your organisation. To the best of your ability, try to engage as many staff members as possible throughout the program.

Example: one-day Work Inspiration program

Times	Activity
9am – 10am	Welcome, introductions and safety briefing Welcome the young people to the office and introduce them to the team. Undertake the required safety briefings.
10am – 11am	Insight Activity One: 'All About Me'
11am – 12pm	Insight Activity Two: 'Behind the Scenes' Workplace tour Present your organisation to the young people, outlining what your organisation does and why, as well as how it works and the various roles and opportunities available to people who might want to work there one day. Having outlined your organisation and the type of work you do, now take the young people on a tour of the workplace stopping to visit some of the employees in action.
12pm – 1pm	Lunch Break
1pm – 2pm	Real-life task
2pm – 3pm	Insight Activity Three: 'Careers Happen'
3pm – 4pm	Students develop career boards and prepare for presentation Reflecting on the careers conversations they've just had, participants create a 'career board'—a visual representation of a staff member's career journey. Participants also write and rehearse a short speech that they will deliver to staff at the end of the day outlining what they've got out of the of the experience, what they've learned and what they are planning to do once they finish school.
4pm – 5pm	Student presentations, evaluation, and farewell Participants present their speeches to a selection of staff members and are presented with a certificate of Work Inspiration completion. They then complete evaluation surveys, say farewell to all the people they have met and present their career boards to relevant staff.

Example: three-day Work Inspiration program

Day one

Times	Activity
9am – 10am	Welcome, introductions and safety briefing Welcome the young people to the office and introduce them to the team. Undertake the required safety briefings.
10am – 11am	Insight Activity One: 'All About Me'
11am – 12pm	Student-led project set-up Brief students on the student-led project you have set for them to complete during the program. Please refer to Designing your program for ideas.
12pm – 1pm	Lunch break
1pm – 2pm	Insight Activity Two: 'Behind the Scenes' (Part A) Present your organisation to the young people, outlining what your organisation does and why, as well as how it work and the various roles and opportunities available to people who might want to work there one day.
2pm – 3pm	Workplace tour/site visit Having outlined your organisation and the type of work you do, now take the young people on a tour of the workplace stopping to visit some of the employees in action.
3pm – 3:15pm	End of Day debrief Every day, try to set aside some time to discuss the day with the group: what have you learned? What did you find most/least interesting? What surprised you? What questions do you have? It is also a good idea to outline with the students what they will be doing the next day during this time as well.

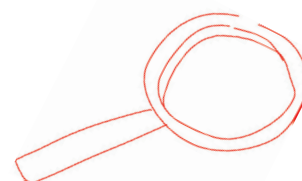
Day Two

Times	Activity
9am – 10am	Student-led project development Students work on their projects. This may involve some assistance from staff depending on the scope of the project and the ability of the young people.
10am – 11am	Insight Activity Two: 'Behind the Scenes' (Part B) Young people meet one-on-one with individual staff members to interview them about their role and find out more about what they do. Ideally, the young person will interview 2-3 people, and at least one of the people they interview will match their personality profile or job of interest from Insight Activity One.

Times	Activity
11am – 12pm	Real-life task Please refer to Designing your program for ideas.
12pm – 1pm	Lunch break
1pm – 2pm	Insight Activity Three: 'Careers Happen' (Part A) An interactive session where young people interview staff members about their career journey, from their teenage years up until now.
2pm – 3pm	Insight Activity Three: 'Careers Happen' (Part B) Reflecting on the careers conversations they've just had, participants create a 'career board', a visual representation of a staff member's career journey.
3pm – 3:15pm	End of Day debrief

Day three

Times	Activity
9am – 11am	Real-life task
11am – 12pm	Student-led project development
12pm – 1pm	Lunch break
1pm – 2pm	Student-led project presentation preparation Students start to prepare for their presentation to staff. This may involve some 'presenting' assistance from staff depending on the ability of the young people.
2pm – 3pm	Student-led project rehearsal and presentation Students rehearse the presentation of their project before giving their official presentation to a selection of staff members.
3pm – 4pm	Evaluation and farewells Participants complete evaluation surveys and are presented with a certificate of Work Inspiration completion (template available in handbook). They then say farewell to all the people they have met and present their career boards to relevant staff.



Example: five-day Work Inspiration program

Day one

Times	Activity
9am – 10am	Welcome, introductions and safety briefing Welcome the young people to the office and introduce them to the team. Undertake the required safety briefings.
10am – 11am	Insight Activity One: 'All About Me'
11am – 12pm	Insight Activity Two: 'Behind the Scenes' (Part A) Present your organisation to the young people, outlining what your organisation does and why, as well as how it work and the various roles and opportunities available to people who might want to work there one day.
12pm – 1pm	Workplace tour/site visit Having outlined your organisation and the type of work you do, now take the young people on a tour of the workplace stopping to visit some of the employees in action.
1pm – 2pm	Lunch
2pm – 3pm	Student-led project set-up Brief students on the student-led project you have set for them to complete during the program. Please refer to Designing your program for ideas.
3pm – 3:15pm	End of Day debrief Every day, try to set aside some time to discuss the day with the group: what have you learned? What did you find most/least interesting? What surprised you? What questions do you have? It is also a good idea to outline with the students what they will be doing the next day during this time as well.

Day two

Times	Activity
9am – 10am	Insight Activity Two: 'Behind the Scenes' (Part B) Young people meet one-on-one with individual staff members to interview them about their role and find out more about what they do. Ideally, the young person will interview 2-3 people, and at least one of the people they interview will match their personality profile or job of interest from Insight Activity One.
10am – 12pm	Real-life task Please refer to Designing your program for ideas.

Times	Activity
12pm – 1pm	Lunch break
1pm – 3pm	Student-led project development Students work on their projects. This may involve some assistance from staff depending on the scope of the project and the ability of the young people.
3pm – 3:15pm	End of Day debrief

Day three

Times	Activity
9am – 10am	Insight Activity Three: 'Careers Happen' (Part A) An interactive session where young people interview staff members about their career journey, from their teenage years up until now.
10am – 11am	Insight Activity Three: 'Careers Happen' (Part B) Reflecting on the careers conversations they've just had, participants create a 'career board', a visual representation of a staff member's career journey.
11am – 12pm	Student-led project development
12pm – 1pm	Lunch break
1pm – 3pm	Real-life task
3pm – 3:15pm	End of Day debrief

Day four

Times	Activity
9am – 11am	Online careers exploration Young people are given time to explore career 'exploration' websites and discover roles/jobs that interest them. It is recommended that a staff member be assigned to guide young people through this activity. Good sites include www.myfuture.edu.au and www.careerlounge.com.au Have students present their findings and thoughts back to the group.
11am – 12pm	Student-led project development
12pm – 1pm	Lunch break

Times	Activity
1pm – 3pm	Real-life task
3pm – 3:15pm	End of Day debrief

Day five

Times	Activity
9am – 11am	Employability/workplace skills workshop or Real-life task
11am – 12pm	Student-led project presentation preparation Students start to prepare for their presentation to staff. This may involve some 'presenting' assistance from staff depending on the ability of the young people.
12pm – 1pm	Lunch break
1pm – 2pm	Student-led project rehearsal and presentation
2pm – 3pm	Evaluation and farewells Participants complete evaluation surveys and are presented with a certificate of Work Inspiration completion (template available in handbook). They then say farewell to all the people they have met and present their career boards to relevant staff.



Young people – A tip sheet

This may be your first time facilitating for a group of young people. Find a list of tips below to help you feel more confident.

1 Stress to participants that during their time with you they will be treated as employees and not students

You will be amazed at how young people will rise to the occasion when you give them the opportunity to do so. Do your best to treat them as you would fellow employees and give them as much control as you can when possible.

2 Feel the energy lagging? Try an icebreaker!

Icebreakers are a great way to re-energise a group. They are particularly useful at the beginning of activities to help people feel more comfortable with each other. We have included a number of icebreakers in the Employer Handbook that you may find useful to use.

3 Be vulnerable, relatable and approachable

Be open about your journey, personal challenges and significant moments of learning. By talking about moments when we didn't get it right, we help demystify expectations around perfection and allow people to be themselves.

4 Encourage risk taking

Using initiative is a key enterprising skill. Encourage young people to ask questions, to make suggestions and take control.

5 Get interested in their story

Ask about their passions, hobbies, significant moments, and what they think their strengths are.

6 Be yourself and show confidence

No matter your personality (introvert or extrovert, loud or quiet), it's inspiring for young people to see you push your own comfort zone as it encourages them to do the same. You don't have to be an experienced youth worker to create engaging experiences for young people. The greatest gift we can offer is being able to help a young person see that they have value.

7 Ask rather than tell

We often switch off when people talk at us, even when it's done with humble intentions. Young people feel included when we ask them their opinions and are often surprised when we do. At first, teenagers may not know how answer our questions or feel confident enough to do so. However, by rephrasing those questions, reassuring them that their opinion is important, and being okay with a bit of awkward silence, you will find that students will eventually open up.

8 Normalise and offer resources.

Just like the rest of us, young people will have concerns and fears about work. We should be aware of this and make them feel normal, no matter how they feel. We also need to remind them that they can chat any of their fears or concerns out with you at any time.

9 Understand different coping mechanisms.

Also just like the rest of us, a young person's behavior is just a reaction to the world around them. Try to be aware of why a young person acts the way they do; is it because they're scared or nervous? Are they unable to relate to what's being said? Are they bored? Or perhaps there are external issues with which they are trying to cope.

10 Acknowledge and affirm.

The smallest compliment can resonate and an acknowledgement, especially in a public setting, could be life-changing. We want to celebrate those moments when a young person taps into their own potential and attempts something that they may have thought beyond them. It can be particularly beneficial to acknowledge triumphs, no matter how small, at the end of the day during debriefs—throughout the day make note of two or three students whom you can acknowledge specifically. Invite other students to do the same for their peers.



Icebreaker games

Birthday Line Up

This is a great team building or ice breaker activity.

Inform that group that they cannot talk from this point forward until you give them permission.

Have the group get in a line.

Tell them they must, in silence, get in order by height.

Once they successfully complete this challenge, you can give the following line up tasks: line up by birthday month, first name etc.

Elephants, Cows and Giraffes

Get into a circle with one person in the centre. This person will then call out elephant, cow, or giraffe. The person that is pointed out, as well as the person on each side of him/her, will have to coordinate their actions and make each animal as described.

Elephant: centre will stick both hands in front of their nose in a cylinder to form a trunk. On each side of them they will form the ears by leaning over placing one hand by the centre person's hips and the other by their head.

Cow: centre person will enter lock their fingers and turn them upside down so that the thumbs point down forming udders. The outside people will then milk the udders.

Giraffes: centre places their hands directly over their head and together forming the neck, while the outside two arch their backs touching the middle person's toes to form the legs.

If they do not get into this position by the count of 5 by the pointer then the last to get into position will become the centre person.



Name Toss

Here are the common rules:

1. Arrange the group in a circle.
2. One person starts off by saying the name of someone else in the circle, and tossing the ball to them.
3. That person then in turn says the name of a different person, and tosses the ball to someone else who has not yet received the ball.
4. That continues until everyone in the circle has received the ball once.
5. Generally, the objective is to pass the ball around the circle without dropping it. If the ball is dropped, the group restarts until completed without dropping.
6. You can add a "thank-you, (name)" from the receiving person if you like.

As always, feel free to change the rules, and make this activity work for you!

Nod-Wink Toss

You may want to start the activity with the traditional name toss. You can however, play this as a stand-alone activity.

Once the group has successfully completed the task, instruct them to be completely silent. Tell them that they must now pass a wink or nod to someone, who in turn, passes the nod/wink to a different person.

To pass a wink, a person simply winks at a different person, who first winks back at them to acknowledge that he/she 'caught' the wink, and then winks at a different person in the circle. And so on...

Variation:

1. Instruct the group to begin passing winks as described above. Then tell the group that you will also have nods, nose-thumbing, tongues sticking-out, and others.
2. Participants do not need to stay in any particular passing order—however, if you receive a nod, you must pass a nod, receive a wink, pass a wink, etc.

Silent Interviews

Divide the group into pairs—try to mix the group into pairs of folks who don't know each other well.

Ask the participants to introduce themselves to their partner.

Instruct the group that from this point forward, speaking is not allowed. This includes whispering, mouthing words, and making sounds, too!

Inform the group that they must tell their partner 3 things about themselves without speaking, similar to a charades game. These things cannot be physical characteristics.

Once all of the partners have finished miming to each other, call everyone back into a circle.

Ask for each pair to verbally introduce their partner to the group, as well as the three things that they learned (or think they learned).

Ten Fingers

This activity is great for the first day or just whenever your group has free time. It works best with more people, and everyone should be honest when playing.

Have everyone sit in a circle or close enough to be able to hear everyone. Tell them to hold up all 10 fingers.

A facilitator can start off by stating one fact about themselves e.g. "I have never been to Darwin." or "I have blue eyes."

Then the participants who haven't been to Darwin, or don't have blue eyes, will put one finger down.

This will continue around the circle, having each person share one fact about themselves until someone is all out of fingers.

It's better to try and use less obvious, unique facts about yourself because there is a chance that more people will have to put a finger down if they can't relate to your fact.

Whoever has the most fingers left at the end of everyone's' turn wins!

This is a great way to pass the time and learn about each other while having simple fun.

You, Me, Left, Right

Have the group form a circle, with the facilitator in the middle serving as the first 'caller'.

Ask the participants to introduce themselves to the people directly on their left and right sides.

Explain to the group that the person in the middle will point to someone in the circle and say either "You" "Me" "Left" or "Right" and count to five at a reasonable pace.

"You" is the person being pointed at.

"Me" is the caller.

"Left" is the person to the left of the one being pointed at.

"Right" is the person to the right of the one being pointed at.

The person being pointed at must correctly name that person before the caller counts to five. If they succeed, the caller moves onto a different person of their choice. If they do not succeed, they become the new caller.

You can add multiple callers as the game moves on.

This is a quick-paced, silly activity that helps move people around and memorise names.



All icebreaker ideas have been taken from: www.ultimatecampresource.com

Employee participant survey

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Our organisation should continue offering Work Inspiration programs in the future.					
I enjoyed taking part in the Work Inspiration program.					
I would like to take part in future Work Inspiration programs.					
I would recommend taking part in Work Inspiration to other staff members.					
I learnt more about my colleagues through taking part in Work Inspiration.					
I think engaging with secondary school students adds value to our organisation.					
I see Work Inspiration as a way of developing the loyalty, motivation and morale of staff at this organisation.					
I see Work Inspiration as a way of developing the loyalty, motivation and morale of staff at this organisation.					
I see Work Inspiration as making work placements a more satisfying experience for both students and staff.					
I see Work Inspiration as a vehicle for my organisation to be a well-respected corporate/business citizen.					

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I see Work Inspiration as a way in which we can help young people develop their career transitions and employability.					
I see Work Inspiration as a way for my organisation to learn from/with young people.					
I see Work Inspiration as a way of helping young people who are considered to be "at risk" and/or have special needs.					
I felt that by taking part in this session I helped make a positive difference to the young people.					

Please tell us about what you felt were the best outcomes of the Work Inspiration program:

How could we improve our Work Inspiration program for the future?

What did you get personally get out of taking part in our Work Inspiration program?

Other Comments:



